

PLAIN DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO WOULD BE SAVED FROM SIN NO. 2033

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JULY 15, 1888,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon
your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
and put your trust in the Lord.”
Psalm 4:4, 5.*

DAVID was surrounded with many wicked and cruel enemies. They touched him in a tender place when they mocked his religion, and so turned his glory into shame. They invented all kinds of lies against him, but the worst of all was that they said, “There is no help for him in God.” As much as to say, “God has cast him off, therefore, let men cast him off. He that is forsaken of the Lord is not fit to sit upon the throne of Israel; let us set up Absalom in his place.” This was malice indeed.

David first made his appeal to God in prayer. Herein he showed his wisdom. You can drive a better business at the mercy seat than in the world's jangling markets. You will get more relief from the righteous Lord than from ungodly men. To enter into debate is never so profitable as to enter into devotion. Carry not your complaint into the lower courts, but go at once to the Court of King's Bench, where the Judge of All presides. Copy David and David's Lord, who in the days of His flesh with strong crying and tears poured out His soul before the Father.

After David had prayed, he expostulated with his adversaries. The first showed his sonship towards God, the second his brotherliness towards men. There is nothing of bitterness in the words I have read to you; they have a kindly voice in them. If his foes had been at all reasonable, they would have listened to his pleadings, but it is to be feared they were otherwise minded. He urges them to cease from sin, and he teaches them the way to do so. In four sentences he helps them to escape from their evil ways, and to become better men. Had God's Spirit applied David's words to their consciences, they would have been pricked in their hearts, and there would have been no need for them to be smitten on the cheekbone, that their cruel teeth might be broken. Upon these four precepts I would speak this morning as the Holy Spirit shall give me utterance, trusting, hoping, and believing that many who desire a better life may find it while I speak. May God begin with them that they may begin with God! I have no confidence in my own persuasions, yet, being called to use them, I trust in Him that sent me to make them effectual.

David mentions four things as helpful towards ceasing from sinning. The first is, *feel reverent awe*, “Stand in awe, and sin not.” The second is, *use thoughtful self-examination*, “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.” The third advice is, *make a right approach to God*—“Offer the sacrifice of righteousness,” and the fourth is the greatest of them all, *exercise faith*—“Put your trust in the Lord.” Here are four steppingstones across the filthy slough of sin; may you mark them well, and step from one to the other by the help of God's Spirit, till you reach the other shore, and stand on safe and clean ground!

I. First, FEEL REVERENT AWE, “Stand in awe.” It might be translated, “Tremble and sin not.” Hardened sinners sin, and tremble not; penitent sinners tremble, and sin not. Gracious work in the heart usually begins with trembling. I cannot believe a man has been saved if he has never trembled before God because of the evil of sin. The old house of depraved nature shakes before it comes down. The returning prodigal must feel, “I am not worthy to be called Your son,” or he will never be called a son. He seeks his Father's face with much trembling, because he has so grievously offended.

Awe is not a common emotion nowadays. This is a flippant age. Men are rather triflers than tremblers. If there is any doctrine which has peculiar weight and solemnity about it, they try to pare it down to less terrible proportions. Sin is not exceeding sinful to them, nor its punishment exceeding terrible. They would not have us know the terrors of the Lord, though by these very terrors we persuade men. But true religion must have a savor of awe about it, “My heart stands in awe of Your word,” is the expression of one that knows God, and is reconciled to Him. Let me say, then, to you who have been thoughtless and careless about your souls until now—we earnestly desire you to consider these words, “Stand in awe.”

Remember, *there is a God*; whatever you may desire, or others may declare, there is a God who made you, and in whose hand your breath is. There is a God that sits in heaven, who beholds all the sons of men, and however much you may dislike the thought, there He is, and there He ever will be, and you will have to deal with Him, and He with you, before long.

God is everywhere present, at all times. He has seen all your evil ways, and heard all your hard speeches. No night is so dark as to hide from His eye; no chamber so retired as to shut Him out. He has even read your thoughts and imaginations. He notes all, and forgets nothing. All things are ever present to Him; the days of your youth and the years of your manhood lie open before Him like a book. If men could but realize that God is there, how could they dare to sin before His very eyes? If at this moment anyone of my hearers who is without Christ could only be filled with this one thought; “You God see me,” surely he would stand in awe, and at least desire to sin no more. Well may the preacher speak very solemnly when he feels that he is surrounded with God, and that God is within him as well as around him! Well may his hearer tremble if he feels that all his thoughts are at this moment read by God! Stand in awe, I pray you, of God, who is now filling this house, and is in your own houses. Will you sin in God’s presence? Can you blaspheme Him to His face? Will you disobey Him while His eyes are fixed upon you? I pray you stand in awe of the eternal God, in whom you live, and move, and have your being!

Remember that this God, who is everywhere, and sees everything, *is your Judge*. He is pure and holy, and cannot bear iniquity. He is angry with the wicked every day, and will surely visit them for their transgressions. Every sinful act shall have its recompense of reward. Do not doubt it. The world is all in a tangle now, but there will be a day when the Lord will draw out a straight thread for each man. Today the wicked prosper, but God will turn their way upside down, and though the righteous are often under a cloud, He will bring forth their judgment as the noonday. Men respect an earthly judge, therefore, I pray you, stand in awe of the Judge of all the earth.

Do not forget also *that your God is almighty*. He has but to will it and the strongest of us would be crushed more easily than a moth. There is no escaping from the Lord; neither the heights of Carmel nor the depths of the sea could afford shelter for a fugitive from the Lord. Neither can any resist Him, for none have any power apart from Him. You have heard His thunder, and trembled at the bolts of His lightning; behold how dreadful God is in arms! How dare you sin against a God so great! Stand in awe. Even holy Job, when he came near to the Lord, exclaimed, “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” How can you feel Him near and not be filled with awe?

Stand in awe of God because *He is infinitely good*. To me personally, some little time ago, the Lord drew very near in a most special and memorable providence. As I saw the hand of the Lord stretched out so marvelously, I felt my very flesh creep, not with alarm, but with a joyful awe of One who could work so tenderly and condescendingly for His tried servant. I knew that He was God by His marvelously gracious care over me, and nearness to my soul in adversity. Verily Jehovah is God, and a great King above all gods. He is to be had in reverence of them that are round about Him. I know now why Jacob said at Bethel, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” He was filled with a holy dread and solemn awe because God had been so near. I therefore say to you—stand in awe of God, because He is infinitely great and good. The illustration which I quoted from my own personal experience, I could not withhold, because it is, even at this hour, one of the most vivid recollections of my life. God has dealt with me very graciously. Oh, His great goodness! A sense of it is overwhelming. We fear and tremble for all the goodness which the Lord makes to pass before us. Think of sin forgiven, of righteousness imputed, of spiritual life imparted, of that life preserved, supplied, nurtured. Think of providence with all mindful foresight, and abounding supplies. The love of God should make us reverent as angels, and humble as penitents. If the impudence of pride might dare to insult justice, yet it should scorn to injure love. There is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared; His grace, if not His glory, should command the reverence of the most obdurate hearts. I pray you stand in awe of God, and sin not. If thoughts of this kind could but dwell in men’s minds, they would surely perceive that sin is a great wrong to the Lord, and they would flee from it, crying like Joseph, “How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

My dear hearers stand in awe in reference to a *future state*. You do not doubt the truth which the Holy Spirit has revealed, that when you die you will not cease to be. There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, “for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Oh, that all persons would remember this wherever they go! I have heard of a soldier—I think he was employed in the survey of Palestine—who was in the valley of Jehoshaphat, outside Jerusalem, and some-

one remarked that it was reported by some that this valley would be the scene of the last judgment, and in that place the multitudes would be gathered. The soldier, hearing this, said, "What a crowd there will be! I shall be there, and I will sit on this stone." He sat down to realize the scene, and his imagination acted so powerfully that he seemed to himself to be among the throng, and to behold the great white throne. He was seen to swoon, and fall to the ground. Do you wonder? If anyone of us could, in our inmost souls, behold that scene, should we not be overcome? I wish I could so speak this morning that some of you would picture that last tremendous day, for which all other days were made. Behold that "*dies irae*," that day of wrath, that day when justice will sit upon the throne! Behold it by anticipation, for it will soon be upon you in very deed. As surely as you live, you will live again, and for every act on earth you must give an account in that last assize. Trifle not, for the Judge is at the door. We may hear His trumpets before this day is over. Let not this thought be driven from you; rather welcome it, and let it abide in your minds; if you were to think of nothing else for a time you might be justified, since it is of such overwhelming importance that you prepare for your final state. Shall a man live and never think of the end of life? Can a man think it wise to occupy himself with frivolities throughout the whole of his earthly existence? While he is shaping his eternal condition, will he do nothing else but sport? Will he never think of that day when his position shall be fixed by the verdict of the great Judge? O my dear hearers, do not forget that you have to live in a future state, and that you will see Him who died upon the cross, seated on the throne, in that day when all nations shall be gathered before Him, and He shall divide them, the one from the other, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. May the thought of the eternal reward also rest on your minds! Hear you, even now, that word of the King to the righteous—"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Hear, also, that dread sentence to those on his left hand, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh, think of these things, and "stand in awe, and sin not"! This awe is one of the strongest moral disinfectants; use it largely. There is no fear of your having too much of it. He that has no fear of God before his eyes sins with a high hand, but awe of the Lord leads to purity of life.

II. In the second place, David admonished the ungodly to practice **THOUGHTFUL SELF-EXAMINATION**. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still."

I am not trying, my dear hearer, to preach a sermon this morning, but I am longing to take you by the hand, and to lead you in the right way. I pray the Holy Spirit to make you willing to follow my gentle guidance. My dear friend, you are now asked to *think about yourself*—"commune with your own heart." When once men choose the way of evil, they run in it with their eyes shut. They do not wish to consider; it is easier to go blindly on. They will think about their worldly concerns, their profits and losses, their pleasures and amusements, but they refuse seriously to consider their condition before God. O my friend, think of what you are, and where you are, what you have done, what you are doing, what it will all lead to! Are you such a fool that you will not consider? Then put on the cap and bells, and wear a jester's suit, and take to your proper trade. And yet, even if you were a merry-andrew, it would become you sometimes to be wise as well as merry, and to take a look into the future, lest you have to take a leap in the dark at last.

Especially think of the state of your heart. This is the vital point. Are you right with God? Do you serve your Maker? Have you truly repented of former sin? Have you fled to Christ as your refuge? Have you been born again? Are you the subject of sanctifying grace? "Commune with your own heart" upon these essential points. He that would have his face clean must look in a glass to see his spots, and he that would have his heart clean must gaze into the mirror of God's Word, that he may discover his secret faults. Your heart may be diseased while your cheek seems ruddy with health. Look within you, man, and be not deceived as to the fountain of your being. Have you really passed from death to life? Does the Spirit of the God of a truth dwell in you? Such questions as these are all-important; I pray you answer them as before the living God, without partiality or negligence.

Think by yourself, alone and in quiet. Oh, how I wish I could induce you to spend an hour or two closeted with yourself! "Commune with your own heart upon your bed,"—at that time when companions are out of the way, when the jest is silenced, and the common talk is hushed. Get by yourself, when you think of yourself, or it will be an impossible task. Choose the hour of night, when all is still around you, and darkness lends its solemnity. You can forego a little natural sleep, if thereby you may be aroused from the sleep of spiritual death. The bed and sleep are instructive emblems of the grave and death; they may aid you in the serious work of examining your hearts. Remember that as you put off your clothes and go to your bed, so you must put off your body and quit the scene of life's activities. Are you ready for that undressing? Make your bed the place of your contrition, even as David did when he said, "All the night make I my bed to swim." The earth outside has its dews, let your heart have its tears.

Think by yourself, of yourself, and then *think for yourself*. You have been carried away by your companions; you have tried to think as they think. The general opinion of the age may have influenced you towards indifference. With a family round about you, you have looked at things too much in the light of business and personal benefit, but all this it will be wise to lay aside. As you will have to die alone, and to put in a personal appearance at the judgment seat of Christ, it will be prudent to divest yourself of your surroundings, and “commune with your own heart.” I commend this text most heartily to your immediate practice. If you are unsaved—think rather than sleep. The tendency of most men with regard to eternal things is to go to sleep, and let matters drift; I pray you do not so. I dare not let you take your rest while all is wrong with you. Sleep, if you like, in a house that is on fire; sleep, if you like, in a ship that is settling down, and rapidly sinking, but I charge you do not sleep while you are an unforgiven man, and your soul is nearing the eternal woe; “Commune with your own heart upon your bed,” use your bed for seeking instead of sleeping. I remember the time when I dared not go to sleep, for fear I might wake up in hell. Many when under conviction of sin have at length resolved not to sleep until they found Christ. I wish that some such feeling as that would steal over you at this moment.

Keep on thinking *till you come to be still*. “Commune with your own heart upon your bed, *and be still*.” Do you know what that means? There comes a time with men whom God is saving that all grows quiet within them. Their old pleasures and desires are hushed, the voice of the outside world is still, and they hear in the silence of their souls “the still small voice” of conscience. Oh, that you were at this moment still enough to hear that warning note! Memory also commences her rehearsals; it tells of the past, and brings forgotten things before the soul. Oh, that all of you would remember and think yourselves that God requires that which is past. Best of all, God speaks in the soul. It was at night, when young Samuel was on his bed that the Lord said to him, “Samuel, Samuel,” and it is when the heart at last has grown still that God’s voice of mercy is heard calling to the man by name. Oh, that in such a case you may have grace to answer, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears”!

I beseech you; give yourselves space for thought, before thought becomes the worm of eternal misery to you. Remember, before you hear that voice from heaven which spoke to the rich man in hell, and said to him, “Son, remember.” You slaves of fashion and frivolity, think, I pray you! You serfs of daily money-grubbing, rest a while, and hear what God the Lord shall speak to you! You can hardly hear the great bell of St. Paul’s when the traffic is thundering around, but it sounds solemnly in the stillness of night. We who live in the more remote suburbs hear Big Ben of Westminster at night, but we seldom note it amid the stir and noise of the day. Do give an opportunity for the eternal voices to pierce the clamors of the hour. Do, for God’s sake, and for your soul’s sake, hear what wisdom teaches concerning everlasting things! O Lord, give grace to my dear hearers, that they may consider their ways, and turn unto Your statutes!

III. Very briefly, let us note that David gives a third piece of advice, which in essence means AP-PROACH UNTO GOD ARIGHT—“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness.”

Now, I do not quite know what David himself may have intended by it, but this is how I interpret it. Come to God; come to God in His own way; come as Israel came to the Tabernacle in the wilderness, bringing their sacrifices with them.

When they brought their sacrifices, the first thing they did was to lay their hand on the victim, and *make a confession of sin*. Come, then, with broken and contrite hearts unto the Lord. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” Own your shortcomings and transgressions. Do not cloak or excuse your sins. Get to your chamber, and tell the Lord what you have done. Pour out your hearts before Him; turn them upside down, as it were, and let all flow out, even to the dregs. Confess your pride and unbelief, your Sabbath-breaking, your dishonesty, your falsehood, your disobedience to parents, your every breach of the divine law, whatsoever you have done amiss, confess it before Him, and thus go to Him in the only way in which He can receive you, even as sinners owning your guilt.

Go also to the Lord with gracious desires to be rid of sin. Entreat reconciliation, saying, “I would no longer be what I have been. I throw down the weapons of my rebellion, I pluck out the plumes of my pride; O Lord, I stand before You, guilty, and I pray You forgive me, and then rid me of the tyrant evils which now rule me so terribly! Oh, that I may sin no more! If I have been a drunkard, help me from this day to relinquish the intoxicating cup; if I have been a swearer, wash out my mouth; may I, henceforth, speak nothing but that which will be acceptable to You! If I have been unchaste, cleanse my mind, that I may keep my body pure!” In this way come to God with contrite hearts. How much do I long that you may draw near to God with true repentance and hearty resolves to conquer sin!

The main thing, however, is to bring unto the Lord *the offering which He has divinely appointed and provided*. You know what that is. There is one sacrifice of righteousness without which you cannot be

accepted. Come to God by faith in Jesus Christ, plead the precious blood of atonement, and say, "My Lord, for His dear sake who died upon the tree, receive Your wanderer, and now be pleased to grant me that repentance and remission of sins which He is exalted to give." My hearers, am I talking so as to reach your hearts? If not, I do not want to talk any longer. I had far rather be silent lest I minister to your condemnation. Hearts that have forgotten your Lord till now, oh, may His Spirit constrain you to return to Him this day through the sacrifice of Jesus! If you come through Christ, you will never be cast out. The Father will receive any sinner that pleads the name of Jesus, and Jesus is willing that you should plead His name. He died on purpose to be the propitiation for our sins; God grant that you may accept Him as such!

Come to your God; this is the great necessity of the hour. Say, "I will arise, and go to my Father." If the prodigal had said, "I will arise, and go to my brother," he would have made a great mistake, for the elder brother would have shut the door in his face. Even if his brother had been of a kinder sort, he could not have forgiven the transgressor; his father alone could do that. Come, then, to your God with earnest prayer; for it prevails with heaven. Come also with humble praise, for it is much that you are yet alive, and not yet cast into the pit. Come to your God and Father, with the resolve henceforth to render Him your life's service, saying, "O Lord our God, other lords beside You have had dominion over us, but by You only will we make mention of Your name!"

IV. I must now close with the fourth point, which is, in some respects, the most important of all; EXERCISE FAITH. When holy awe and thoughtful self-communion have led us to seek the Lord, then we are prepared for the great precept which follows. It is the command of the gospel in its Old Testament form, "Put your trust in the Lord." In whom should a man trust but in his God? It may seem reasonable to trust our fellow creature, but, alas! Man is a frail thing, and to lean upon him ensures a fall; it is, therefore, unreasonable to trust in the creature, but to rely upon the Creator is the dictate of pure reason. May God, the Holy Spirit, lead you at once to a childlike faith in our faithful God!

"Put your trust in the Lord." First, *trust Him as willing to receive you*, to forgive you, to accept you, and to bless you. Are you despairing? Do you say, "There is no hope"? "Put your trust in the Lord." Are you saying, "I am without strength, and, therefore, cannot be saved"? Why not? "Put your trust in the Lord." Does the evil one say that God will not receive you? "Put your trust in the Lord," who is infinitely gracious, and full of compassion. He says, "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Surely, you may trust in Him whose mercy endures forever.

Especially *trust in the Lord as He reveals Himself in the person of His Son Jesus Christ*. In Him you see love written out in capital letters. "Put your trust in the Lord" as having provided the one sacrifice for sin, whereby He has put away forever all the sins of those who believe in Him. God is just, and the justifier of him that believes. Believe that the precious blood can make you whiter than snow, scarlet sinner as you are. Come with that daring trust which ventures all upon the bare promise of a faithful God. Say, "I will go in unto the King, and if I perish I perish." If you do not trust in Christ, you must be lost, therefore come and try the divine way of salvation. The Lord Jesus is God's unspeakable gift, freely bestowed on all who by faith receive Him. Dare to grasp what God holds out to you as the one hope of your spirit. Put your trust in the Lord, I beseech you. By His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension, I entreat you to trust in the Son of God, who has once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Trust in the Lord, next, *that by the work of His Holy Spirit He can renew you*. The glorious Lord, who made the world out of nothing, can make something out of you yet. If you are given to anger, the Holy Spirit can make you calm and loving. If you have been defiled with impurity, He can make you pure in heart. If you have been groveling, He can elevate you. I may be addressing a forlorn man, who thinks that nothing can be made of him. I tell you, you have no idea what God can do with you. He can put heavenly treasure in earthen vessels. He can set you at last among the heavenly choristers, that your voice, sweeter than that of angels, may be heard among their everlasting symphonies. He will even here put you among the children, and set you with the princes of His people. Believe that the Holy Spirit can create you anew, can raise you from your dead condition, and can make you perfect in every good work to do His will. Put your trust in the Lord for this.

In short, "Put your trust in the Lord" *for everything*. Poor sinner, when you begin to trust God, you will look to Him mainly to put away your sin, but when that gift is received, you may go on to trust Him about all your affairs. You may look to Him concerning your poverty, your sickness, your bereavements, your children, your business; you may trust Him for time, and trust Him for eternity; trust Him about little things, trust Him about great things. Once under the shadow of His wings you are covered alto-

gether, nothing is left out in the cold. To trust in God is to be your perpetual business, “For the just shall live by faith.”

My closing theme is this—it has been asserted by certain of the modern school that we preach up salvation by a simple intellectual operation—salvation by merely believing a certain doctrinal statement. This is their way of stating, or mis-stating, justification by faith, which we do assuredly preach, and preach most distinctly and confidently. We are not responsible for their caricatures of our teaching, but we would be moved thereby to be more and more explicit. As far as faith is an intellectual operation, it is simple enough, but simple faith is no trifle. Fire is a simple element, but it has a measureless power. Connected with faith there are forces of the mightiest kind for influencing character and purifying life. Faith is the surest of all sin-killers; in fact, its tendency is to extirpate sin. The moral and spiritual change which accompanies faith, and grows out of it, is of the most remarkable kind. Faith’s work in the soul is something to be wondered at, and to be admired to all eternity.

For, mark, when a man believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, when he believes that Jesus so died for him that he is effectually redeemed, when he believes that the Lord Jesus has cleansed him, and that he is saved, the result upon his heart and life cannot be common-place. So divine a persuasion, operates upon his whole nature. *He is filled with adoring gratitude*, and that gratitude breeds an *intense love*, which fervent love sets itself to work for the glory of God by the purification of the soul for sin. “My Jesus died because of my sin,” says the pardoned sinner, “therefore no sin shall abide in my heart. Away, O sin! Away, forever.” Some favorite sin cries, “Let me lodge within you,” but he cries, “It cannot be, for I love Jesus.” Sin slew our Savior; how can we be on friendly terms with it? We hate it with perfect hatred. Sin pleads, “Is it not a little one?” But the grateful heart sees great evil in a little sin, since the great Father abhors all iniquity. If the little sin was not the spear which pierced the Lord, it helped to make the crown of thorns which tore His blessed brow, and therefore away with it, away with it—

*“The dearest idol I have known,
Whatever that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only Thee.”*

Nothing creates more indignation and revenge against sin than a grateful sense of “free grace and dying love.” Surely this is no mean help towards moral purification.

Faith in God is effective for the noblest ends upon the soul because *it elevates the mind*. The man who is hoping to be saved by his own works and efforts begins on earth and ends there, but the habit of looking up to God is in itself a blessing. It is something to have learned to look beyond this dunghill of fallen humanity, in which no one will ever find a pearl. It is something, I say, to wait upon God because your expectation is from Him. Trust in the sacred Trinity teaches us to be familiar with higher and better things than we can find in ourselves, or in this poor world. A hold of heaven is a help towards drawing us there. I find that those who do not put their trust in the Lord are by no means spiritual men, nor men whose conversation is in heaven, but the faith which they despise puts our foot on that ladder the top of which reaches up to God.

Faith in God *brings new ideas of God’s demands*. When we do not know God, we read His law, and judge it to be harsh. “This is too strict; this is too holy. How can we obey this hard law?” But when we have faith in God, we correct our estimate, and judge that these laws of our heavenly Father are all meant for our good. He only forbids what would harm us, and He only commands what is most truly for our benefit. By faith we look upon the law as a loving directory—a chart of life’s voyage showing what channel to follow, and what rock to avoid. “His commandments are not grievous.” He takes from us no real pleasure, and imposes no crushing burden. To form so much better an estimate of God’s law is a great moral change, is it not? Must it not greatly affect the man’s behavior?

The man who puts his trust in the Lord *sees the pleasures of sin in a new light*, for he sees the evil which follows them, by noting the agonies which they brought upon our Lord, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Without faith a man says to himself, “This sin is a very pleasant thing, why should I not enjoy it? Surely I may eat this fruit, which looks so charming, and is so much to be desired.” The flesh sees honey in the drink, but faith at once perceives that there is poison in the cup. Faith spies the snake in the grass, and gives warning of it. Faith remembers death, judgment, the great reward, the just punishment, and that dread word—eternity! Faith sees the end as well as the beginning. Faith, while the feast is going on, reminds the revelers of the reckoning. Faith feels that she cannot buy the transient joys of earth at the countless cost of an immortal soul. “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Faith destroys the power of temptation. When Satan says, “You are in trouble, and here is an easy way of escape; only do a little wrong and you will get a great good.” “No,” says faith, “it is God’s busi-

ness to get me out of my trouble, and I will not go to the devil for his aid.” “Ah,” says Satan, “everybody else does so!” Faith answers, “I have to do with nobody but God, and that which is right.” Ah, brethren! If Satan should offer us all the kingdoms of this world if we would do his bidding, true faith would baffle him by saying, “What can you offer me? I have all these things already, for all things are mine in Christ Jesus my Lord.” When faith is in its true place, covering the believer, all the wicked suggestions of the evil one are caught upon it and quenched by it, like fiery darts which fall upon a shield. We are preserved from temptation by the buckler of faith.

Moreover, faith is always attended with a new nature. That is a point never to be forgotten. No man has faith in God of a true kind unless he has been born again. Faith in God is one of the first indications of regeneration. Now, if you have a new and holy nature, you are no longer moved towards sinful objects as you were before. The things that you once loved you now hate, and, therefore, you will not run after them. You can hardly understand it, but so it is that your thoughts and tastes are totally changed. You long for that very holiness which once it was irksome to hear of, and you loathe those very pursuits which were once your delights. When the Lord renews us it is not half done; it is a total and radical change. If there were no work of the Holy Spirit connected with faith, and if faith were nothing more than human assent to truth, we might be blameworthy for preaching salvation through it, but since faith leads the van in the graces of the Spirit of God, and turns the rudder of the soul, we are more and more concerned to place faith where God places it, and we say without hesitation, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Remember you will thus be saved from the power of sin and from the practice of sin by being saved from the love of sin. O brothers and sisters, I am not afraid to preach to you justification by faith alone! Look to Jesus and live! I would bid the sinner come to Jesus just as he is, and take Him to be his complete salvation. We do not preach to you the hope of going to heaven, and yet keeping your sins; indeed, till sin is stopped, there can be no heaven. Our Lord Jesus has opened a hospital, and into it He receives all manner of sick folk, yet He does not receive them that they may continue sick, but that He may heal them, and make them whole. He receives the sinful that He may make them holy. He saves men by changing their natures, and infusing into them a heavenly life. Come, then, you leprous in heart, come you to Him whose touch can make you clean! Come, you with withered limbs, incapable of holy exercise; He can, with a word, restore you! Come here, you blind, for He will give you sight! Yes, rise, you dead, for He shall give you life! Repentance and remission are twin gifts which He is exalted to bestow. Come you now to Him, and receive out of His fullness!

The thought of death is constantly forced upon me by the largeness of this congregation, and the fact that there seldom passes a week but what some one among you is taken away. Soon your bodies will lie beneath the greensward, and your souls will be in the eternal state. In due time you will stand where your past will be revived, for the books shall be opened, and you will be judged out of the things which are written in those books. What a record you have written within the Book of remembrance, to be read aloud in that day! Oh, you ungodly ones, what will you do then? Christ-rejecting sinner, how will you bear to hear those items read before the assembled world? If from this pulpit I were to read out certain incidents of your past lives, I do not suppose you would get up to go out, for that would convict you, but you would want to go very badly. How, then, will you endure to have your sins laid bare by the hand of God, while every eye beholds them? How will you bear that shame and everlasting contempt which will be the result of your true character being blazoned abroad? How infinitely good it will be if all your past offenses shall be blotted out! How joyful to be wholly absolved by the Lord of pardons! If by believing in Christ Jesus you receive a change of nature, and live a different life, and stand at the last day accepted in the Beloved, what bliss it will be! What joy will be yours when Jesus comes, when His smile shall light up the universe, and when He shall acknowledge you before the angels of God! You were with Him in His humiliation, you shall be with Him in His exaltation; you loved Him and served Him here below, you shall sit upon His throne, and reign with Him forever and ever. Ah! Then, whatever little you may have suffered for His sake will be as nothing in comparison with the exceeding weight of glory. Whatever struggling of heart and pain of soul you felt in escaping from the sin which enthralled you will be your joy when the result is seen in your eternal perfection. The bliss of beholding the face of our Beloved will be heaven enough for us. Even now I feel eager to quit this feeble body at the bare thought of being with the Bridegroom of my soul—

*“My eyes shall see Him in that day,
The God that died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to Thee?”*

May you and I, behold our Redeemer when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALMS 3, 5.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—18 (VERSION 3), 588, 525.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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